

Anyone who has shopped at a grocery store or a mall with children – especially young children – knows that the experience can sometimes be trying, even highly stressful.

Here are some steps that can change potential misery into potential mastery of shopping with kids.



Department of Family Services
Child Protective Services

703-324-7400

TTY 703-222-9452

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs



Keeping Kids Safe

the Blue Ribbon Campaign to
prevent child abuse and neglect

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request by calling 703-324-7720; TTY 703-222-9452. To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-324-5870; TTY 703-222-9452

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TIPS FOR SHOPPING WITH YOUR CHILD

Fairfax County
Department of Family Services



PLAN AHEAD

Check Attitude

Is your child too tired or hungry to shop? Are you? If yes, postpone your trip or find a sitter for your child(ren).

Explain the Rules

Before entering the store, make your expectations clear, such as, “Stay close to me,” and “Use your quiet voice.”

Agree on Rewards for Good Behavior

Keep it simple, such as a choice of a favorite snack food, or a stop at the park. Promise to read a story or play a game at home.

AT THE STORE

Make a Game Out of Shopping

Who can see the bananas? Who can find the shoe store first? Who can see a person wearing red? Which store begins with the letter “T”?

Give Children Some Choices

When possible, allow your child(ren) to make some decisions. Blue or red socks? Chocolate or vanilla ice cream? Be prepared to bargain or compromise.

Play

“I see something.” Then ask your child(ren) what it is.

Praise Your Child

“You are being so helpful.” A hug can be reassuring and say more than words at times.

IF ALL ELSE FAILS

Remember: Kids will be kids – they are not perfect. Of course, neither are we, but we are the adults

- Ignore inappropriate behavior unless it becomes dangerous, destructive, annoying to others or truly embarrassing.
- Remove a child who is out of control. Take him to the restroom or out of the store. Tell the child quietly, eye-to-eye, that bad behavior is absolutely unacceptable.
- Wait (say nothing at all) for the child to calm down, then ask if he is ready to try again.
- Go home if the child cannot calm down. If the shopping cannot wait, find a sitter and return alone.